



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8

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NOV 09 2007

Ref: 8EPR-N

Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent
Yellowstone National Park
Mary Gibson Scott, Superintendent
Grand Teton National Park
c/o Temporary Winter Use Plan
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190

Re: 2007 Winter Use Final EIS CEQ 20070405

Dear Superintendents Lewis and Scott:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for Winter Use Plans in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and for the J.D. Rockefeller National Parkway (Parks), with a focus on the responses in the Final EIS to EPA's June 13, 2007, comment letter on the Draft EIS.

EPA acknowledges the improvements gained in the Parks' winter environment compared to historic conditions. The NPS's preferred alternative identified in the Final EIS incorporates best available technology (BAT) for all over-snow vehicles and requires full commercial guiding. EPA supports the NPS's commitment to the BAT program which reduces vehicle emissions and noise compared to conditions that existed historically. We also agree with this Final EIS that full commercial guiding is critical to protecting resources and visitor experiences under any alternative.

EPA encourages the NPS to implement the exemplary adaptive management program outlined in the Final EIS. This adaptive management program defines important resource protection thresholds, including thresholds for air quality and soundscape protection that should not be exceeded in the final decision. If the program's monitoring component is funded over the long term and none of the current thresholds are exceeded, EPA is confident that this program will assure adequate resource protection.

On June 13, 2007, EPA provided comments on the Draft EIS. EPA is concerned that a number of these comments are not fully addressed in the Final EIS. Specifically, the Final EIS is not entirely responsive to EPA's concerns regarding adaptive management, desired conditions, the effects of air quality and noise on visitor experience, available mitigation for natural soundscapes, and unsupported statements on snowcoach impacts. We trust that NPS will consider addressing these remaining concerns as you prepare the Record of Decision and Final Rule for this action.

Thank you for considering EPA's comments. If you have any questions, please call me at (303) 312-6308 or Larry Svoboda, Director of EPA Region 8's NEPA program, at (303) 312-6004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "RE Roberts". The signature is stylized with a large "R" and "E" followed by the name "Roberts".

Robert E. Roberts
Regional Administrator